

MEMORANDUM

January 26, 1953

TO: Mr. Nelson C. Jackson, Director
Community Services

FROM: Ray H. Morris,
Field Representative

SUBJ: Philadelphia Field Visit - January 20 - 22, 1953.

Purpose of Visit:

To determine as nearly as possible the status of new housing completed and/or scheduled in lower Bucks County, Pa., since announcement of plans to build Fairless Works.

To determine the status of plans of local groups to purchase Levittown houses for resale to Negroes.

To follow-up idea of human relations program to be started by Steelworkers Union local in Bristol.

Background Information:

This was a follow-up visit continuing our Bucks County operation. Specific purpose was a result of the NUL-Board-Staff Bucks County Committee meeting the day before, on January 19th.

Problems Presented:

Housing - To determine the status of new housing and to identify any which Negroes are being afforded opportunity to buy or rent was a difficult chore to accomplish in three days. A block-by-block survey was impossible. Moreover, heavy rains on the first and second days of the visit, and the fact that many builders were out-of-town attending a conference both operated against securing a sampling of builders' policies regarding racial occupancy.

Experience at one secondary source, the Regional Office of the Veterans Administration, presented a problem that should be taken up with the Veterans Administration in Washington. This involves the establishment of satisfactory cooperation on matters of veterans' housing which will permit regional or local V.A. officers greater freedom of effort with NUL representatives when working on mutually desirable operations. (I am sending a memorandum on this to Mr. Reginald Johnson, Director, Department of Housing Activities.)

Action Taken:

Housing - As a result of conferences with officers at the Regional Office of the Federal Housing Administration and at the Veterans Administration, the following list was compiled. This list indicates the number and location ¹(by township) of all dwelling units built in groups of more than five, not previously reported by me (see my report dated November 24, 1952) in lower Bucks County since January 1, 1951. Each item represents a different "offering" to the public, ²but not always by a different builder.

<u>Location and No. of Projects</u>	<u>Proposed No. of Units, by project</u>	<u>Proposed Price</u>
Bristol Township	3	\$9,550.
	3	9,550.
	5	9,850
	5	10,100.
	3	10,100.
	5	10,100.
	5	10,100.
	5	11,700.
	5	13,000.
	6	9,550.
23 Separate Projects	8	9,950.
	7	11,700.
	8	10,000.
	10	10,350.
	14	9,100.
	21	9,290.
	21	10,300.
	21	10,350.
	23	11,500.
	18	11,500.
	43	10,200.
	30	10,250.
	23	13,300.
	<u>342</u>	
Lower Southampton	3	11,500.
	11	10,150.
3 Separate Projects	13	12,000.
	<u>25</u>	
Middletown	7	11,500.
	11	11,500.
3 Separate Projects	14	11,000.
	<u>32</u>	
New Britain Boro	3	9,900.
Newtown	5	13,000.

<u>Location and No. of Projects</u>	<u>Proposed No. of Units, by project</u>	<u>Proposed Price</u>
Richland	23	\$9,450.
Tallytown Falls	9	9,705.
Upper Southampton	9	7,800.
	11	7,800.
	21	7,800.
	97	
Warminster	15	14,900.
Bensalem	5	10,000.
	11	9,350.
	16	
Doylestown Boro	10	11,000.
	25	11,750.
	35	
Falls and Middletown "Levittowners"	1,396	10,500.
	3,084	10,000.
	4,482	
Falls	6	9,700.
	7	10,000.
	1	9,525.
	14	
Hilltown	8	11,750.
Lower Wakefield	10	10,750.
	42	11,600.
	52	

(Though Mr. Morris Hilgrim could not be reached, as Mr. Reginald Johnson had suggested, I learned that his proposed site has been approved. However, as yet, he has not filed any applications for mortgage insurance or guarantee. He is doing business with the Eastern Mortgage Company.)

- 1 I have additional information as to location of almost all of the units listed here. I have inspected a few of them.
- 2 None could be found offered to Negroes.

Employment:

At the headquarters office of District 7, United Steelworkers of America, CIO, I conferred on the general item of our cooperation on Bucks County objectives. I also sought unofficial district level thinking on some joint union-NUL action to locate Negroes qualified for higher echelon jobs at Fairless Works.

I explained that immediate NUL interest is two-fold: We want to see (1) Negroes in higher level jobs at Fairless Works rather than employed in only lower job classifications; and (2) to see high-level Negro job holders assigned to the list of those eligible for Fairless Village houses. I pointed out that the policy of the United States Steel Company, as stated to me, is to place in Fairless Village only those high-level employees transferred to Fairless Works, and that no Negroes have been transferred or are to be found in such high-level job classifications.

Mr. Charles Ford, Executive Director, District 7, United Steelworkers of America, CIO, said that his union won the election at Fairless Works on January 12, 1953, and that now no production worker may be hired or transferred except in conformity with the US of A - USS Co. Agreement. The Agreement covers production and maintenance workers. Mr. Ford feels, therefore, that the only approach to our immediate objective, insofar as the union is concerned, is by way of upgrading, regularly provided for in the Agreement.

The importance of broad cooperation on this specific situation was emphasized as recalled that the lowest job classification of a person transferred to Fairless Works is said to be 14. Yet, I haven't found or secured information about any Negro employed in any division of USS at higher than job-classification 12. Negroes said to have high classifications are usually at "8 point" jobs.

Mr. Ford said that throughout USS Co. plants, Negroes are rarely found above classification 8 - though there are a few Negroes who have been promoted to jobs as foremen or gang bosses. However, foremen are not members of the United Steelworkers of America --and are not considered important enough to transfer to Fairless Works either. According to Mr. Ford, there are about 56 Negroes working as foremen at the Homestead plant, 10 at the Duquesne plant and about 10 at the Clairton plant.

Present total Negro employment at Fairless Works is estimated at 30. They are working in several operations, including the maintenance department --even though "the union had to fight to get Negroes into the maintenance department at another USS Co. plant."

Education:

Mr. Varner the (Bucks County) representative of the United Steelworkers of America, said that the Bristol union local membership received the idea of a human relations program with great indifference. This indifference is showed about the total situation presented by Fairless Works and new housing in the county.

The plan of the UAW - Trenton local, to buy a Levitt house and recall it to a Negro union member, has "died a natural death." Here again, indifference was described.

Efforts with these labor groups will have to be sparked with intensive interest. Mr. Ford suggests that Mr. Frank Flatch (Kaiser Metal local) be worked with toward that end.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

To the extent that policy set forth in our board-staff Bucks County Committee meetings coincides, the following steps are recommended:

1. Contact should be established with all builders in lower Bucks County whose new or proposed dwelling units have any possibility of being sold or rented to Negroes. Efforts should be directed with them towards effecting the most desirable open occupancy tenancy.

2. Despite the existence of routine channels for upgrading workers in United States Steel Company plants, it seems that twenty years have passed with no Negro getting up to job-classification 16. A program should be worked out with the Steelworkers Union to bring about a change in this condition.

3. A recruitment effort should be begun in Philadelphia, Trenton, Camden, and environs, to find Negroes for eventual referral to Fairless Works for technical jobs and for apprenticeship training.

cc: Mr. Granger - Mr. Moss
Mr. Jackson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Parris
Miss Tammyhill - Mr. Finley - Mr. Pope
Dr. Banner